

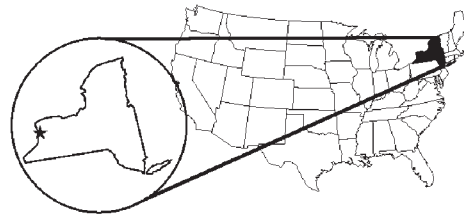
## BUFFALO, NEW YORK



*Population Rank:* U.S. .... # 58  
New York ..... # 2

*Proportions:* 5:8 (official)

*Adopted:* 7 May 1924 (official)



**DESIGN:** The field of Buffalo's flag is dark blue with a central image in white. In the center is the city seal, from which emanate thirteen rays ("electric flashes") of three jagged sections each similar to the conventional depiction of lightning flashes. Between each pair of flashes is a five-pointed star, point outwards. The seal itself has a narrow ring around the outside edge. The seal's field is white with blue figures. In the upper half, from the hoist, are a lighthouse on a pier, a three-masted ship under full sail (bow toward the hoist), and a small sailboat. The top of the pier and the surface of the water on which the ship and boat are sailing (Lake Erie) form the bisecting line. The waters of the lake occupy about a third of the top of the seal's lower half. The remainder shows a shoreline, below which the old Erie Canal is seen, with a canal boat (also headed toward the hoist) being drawn by two horses or don-

keys, one ahead of the other. The rear animal has a human figure riding it. The lower edge of the canal has a fence running along it, and below are shrubs, filling in the remainder of the seal.

The Charter and Code of the City of Buffalo (1974) specifies the official dimensions:

*Said flag in dimensions shall be five (5) feet wide by eight (8) feet long, or a flag of other dimensions may be used if the width and length and the following elements are of similar proportions. The inner and outer circles above indicated on a flag of five by eight (5x8) feet shall be, respectively, eighteen (18) inches and twenty-two (22) inches in diameter. The electric flashes shall be sixteen (16) inches long and approximately one and one-half inches wide at the base, which base shall be separated from the outer circle by a space of one-fourth (1/4) inch. The stars shall be four (4) inches tip to tip, and the center of each star shall be sixteen (16) inches distant from the center of the circle.*

**SYMBOLISM:** The 13 stars symbolize that New York was one of the thirteen original colonies of the United States. The flashes recall the fact that Buffalo was one of the first cities to install electricity widely. The ship and lighthouse on the seal show that Buffalo is an important commercial port on Lake Erie, and the boat suggests that the lake is also a center for recreation. Buffalo was the terminus of the Erie Canal, which helped to develop the city commercially.

**HOW SELECTED:** By the city planning committee, which held a citywide contest.

**DESIGNER:** Louis Greenstein, president of the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

**MORE ABOUT THE FLAG:** The designer was awarded \$250 as winner of the contest. The prize was presented to him by the mayor on 14 June 1924, Flag Day, which was declared a holiday for the occasion. Greenstein had designed a similar flag in 1907 for the Old Home Week celebration that was chosen by a committee at that time as the best design.



**FORMER FLAG:** On 3 June 1912, Mayor L. P. Fuhrmann and the commissioner of public works, Francis G. Ward, proposed a flag to the city council that was apparently not adopted officially. This flag has a “Continental buff” field with the coat of arms of New York

in its center. Superimposed on the shield of the arms is the city’s seal. Both arms and seal are all in blue. While Fuhrmann and Ward asserted in their letter to the council that it was common in other cities to use the city seal superimposed on the arms of the state, no such practice was in fact observed.

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